

Message Text

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TAGS: TSPA, UK

SUBJ: NASA MOBILE LASER RANGING STATION ON BERMUDA AND
GRAND TURK

REF: (A) LONDON 15859; (B) LONDON 16186

1. WE HAVE NOW RECEIVED CONFIRMATION IN WRITING FROM FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE THAT WE HAVE HMG APPROVAL TO PROCEED WITH CONSTRUCTION OF LASER STATIONS BERMUDA AND GRAND TURK. (PREVIOUS APPROVALS HAD BEEN VERBAL.) WRITTEN CONFIRMATION IS CONTAINED IN LETTER DATED DEC. 23 FROM DAVID, DEFENSE DEPT., IN WHICH HE ASKS AGAIN FOR FURTHER INFORMATION TO RELIEVE CONCERN BRITISH HAVE ABOUT POSSIBLE DANGERS TO AIR TRAFFIC WHICH MAY ARISE ONCE LASERS START OPERATING. DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THIS INFORMATION WAS FIRST REQUESTED BY BRITISH ON DEC 4(REF A) BUT TO DATE WE HAVE HAD NO REPLY. WOULD APPRECIATE REQUESTED INFO ASAP.

2. FOLLOWING IS FULL TEXT OF FCO LETTER:

ESTABLISHMENT OF NASA MOBILE LASER RANGING STATIONS ON GRAND TURK AND BERMUDA

1. WE ARE SATISFIED THAT YOUR PROPOSAL TO BUILD A MOBILE LASER RANGING STATION WITHIN THE NASA BASE ON BERMUDA FALLS WITHIN THE TERMS OF THE 1961 AGREEMENT (AS MODIFIED BY THE 1963 EXCHANGE OF NOTES) AND THAT THE STATION ON GRAND TURK FALLS WITHIN ANNEX F, PARAGRAPH 2(A) OF THE 1961 AGREEMENT ON UNITED STATES DEFENCE AREAS
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BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERATION OF THE WEST INDI-

ES AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. WE ARE FOR OUR PART CONTENT THAT YOU SHOULD NOW GO AHEAD WITH THE INSTALLATIONS. I BELIEVE YOU KNOW THAT THE GOVERNOR OF BERMUDA HAS BEEN BRIEFED BY YOUR CONSUL-GENERAL AND HAS GIVEN HIS APPROVAL FOR THE PLAN. THE GOVERNOR OF THE TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS HAS ALSO INDICATED HIS AGREEMENT.

2. HOWEVER, WE ARE STILL A LITTLE CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE DANGER TO AIR TRAFFIC IN THE VICINITY OF BERMUDA AND GRAND TURK THAT MAY ARISE ONCE THE LASERS START OPERATING WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD LET US HAVE A LITTLE MORE INFORMATION SO THAT WE CAN MEASURE WHAT YOU PROPOSE AGAINST ACCEPTED SAFETY STANDARDS. WE WOULD PARTICULARLY LIKE TO KNOW:

- A. THE WAVE LENGTH OF THE LASERS INSTALLED;
- B. THE POWER OUTPUT OR ENERGY OUTPUT;
- C. WHETHER IT IS PULSED OR CONTINUOUS WAVE; AND
- D. ANY OTHER INFORMATION RELEVANT TO THE PROBLEM OF AIR SAFETY.

INDEED, BECAUSE WE BEAR SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SAFETY OF CIVIL AND MILITARY AIR TRAFFIC IN THE VICINITY OF BOTH ISLANDS, WE SHOULD LIKE TO BE SATISFIED ON THIS ASPECT BEFORE THE LASERS ARE BROUGHT INTO OPERATION. IN ADDITION, WE CONSIDER THAT IT WOULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE UNITED STATES AUTHORITY CONCERNED TO ENSURE THAT SUITABLE WARNING IS GIVEN TO CIVIL AND MILITARY AIRCRAFT OPERATING IN THE AREA OF THE TIMES OF OPERATION OF THE STATIONS AND THAT NORMAL AIR INFORMATION SERVICE (AIS) ACTION AND PROCEDURES WOULD BE FOLLOWED IF APPROPRIATE. YOURS SINCERELY, T J DAVID, DEFENCE DEPARTMENT.

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